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4. Yi Mu Sei, She gives sons, protects women when they have conceived and during childbirth, and protects children. 776

5. Mya Wei Sei who protects men and boys.

6. Sti P'r Sei who protects women and girls in matters not connected with childbirth.

7. Do Dzu Sei a door god who is on the right side and keeps demons out of the homes.

8. Nu Nga Sei a door god on the left side who helps keep out demons.

9. Sbe Pri Sei, the god of the bin who controls the five grains after they have been harvested and are in the house or in the bin.

10. Mo Bo Sei or Mu Bo Sei, the fire god who controls the fire in the home lest it burn up the house.

11. Abba Sei, the male ancestor.

12. Ata Sei, The female ancestor.

These are regarded as so distinctly Ch'iang gods that they are put into a different category than the Chinese gods whose images are worshipped in shrines, in homes and in temples. The pronunciation of the names of the gods as given above is that which was given us at Ta Ho P'in Chai, near Wen Ch'uan.

The above Ch'iang gods have no images.

There may be other gods that are regarded as Ch'iang, but at present we can not affirm it with certainty. Many Chinese gods, however, are commonly worshipped by the Ch'iang. Among them are the Pearly Emperor, Ch'uan Chu 川主, the Lord of Szechwan, Wang yeh 王爺 who is elsewhere the god of boatmen. The housegod 天地君親師位 meaning Heaven, Earth, Rulers, Relatives, Scholars, the T'ai Shan Shih Kan Tang 泰山石敢當, the T'u Ti 土地, Kuanyin, and many others. They are regarded by the Ch'iang as real, living deities.

4. The Priesthood.

The Ch'iang are a very reverent and devout people, and their religious ceremonies and rituals are considered to be very important. They must be performed with exactness and fitting decorum. Some of them are long. Since they have no written language their chants or songs, which they regard as the equivalents of sacred 793 538

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793 538 books, are taught by word of mouth, memorized and passed down from generation to generation, from father to son or from teacher to pupil. In Tung Men Wai and at P'u Wa the line has ceased and there is now no Ch'iang priest. There must be no incorrectness in the performances or in the repetitions. There is therefore a special priesthood who, however, are also farmers and have wives and children. They are important persons, highly respected in their communities, but they have no distinctive dress.

793 The priest officiates in all important ceremonies. At least that is the ancient custom. In localities where there are no priests, as at Tung Men Wai, the local people sometimes officiate, or a Taoist priest may be called to perform funeral ceremonies or to exorcise demons, since the Ch'iang priests are more expensive.

In most of the ceremonies performed to Mu Bya Sei on the housetops, the head of the house officiates. On special or most important occasions the Ch'iang priest is called in. Since he is an important person, whenever he officiates in such a ceremony he must be boarded and lodged, given meat or some other commodity, and there must be a special feast. Sometimes he must be paid money also. Since the priest has no special costume, he wears the white homespun garments such as are worn by all Ch'iang worshippers.

793 796 Priests are responsible for conducting sacred ceremonies that bring contact with and assistance from the gods. They have superhuman potency without which their work and ceremonials would not be efficacious. In 1933 a priest told the writer his ceremonial implements and stated that the reason he sold them and no longer acted as priest was that he had lost his efficacy.

When a priest has finished his course of instruction and is ready to begin his work as a priest, an ordination ceremony takes place. His face is ceremoniously washed with sacred water for purposes of purification. Incense, candles, and cedar twigs are burnt and a white cockerel is killed. After the ceremony, which takes place in the sacred grove, he takes his full responsibility as priest.

The priest, who in different localities is called bi bu (bi- bu-), bi bo or bi mu performs the following ceremonies:—

1. He conducts the worship of the great god or gods in the sacred grove on the first day of the sixth moon, or the first day of